

IN THE CLAIMS:

For the Examiner's convenience, all claims currently pending have been reproduced below.

1-12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) A supporting apparatus for supporting a member, which mounts a movable stage, above a base, said apparatus comprising:

a permanent magnet arranged on one of the member and the base;

a pair of permanent magnets arranged on the other of the member and the base, and arranged so that said permanent magnet is interposed therebetween; and

a linear motor which is arranged between the member and the base, and provides a force which acts on the member,

wherein magnetized directions of said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are perpendicular to a gravity direction, which is a direction of gravity acting on the member, and

a width of said pair of permanent magnets is different from a width of said permanent magnet in a direction perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction, and

said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are configured to generate a force in the gravity direction and to support the member above the base in the gravity direction through the force.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said pair of permanent magnets are arranged on the base.

16. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising changing means for changing a region in which said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets face each other.

17. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said changing means moves said pair of permanent magnets in a direction perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction.

18. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are arranged so that a spring constant is substantially zero in the direction perpendicular to the magnetized directions and the gravity direction.

19. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus for exposing a substrate to a pattern, said apparatus comprising:

- a movable stage which holds the substrate;

- a member which mounts said movable stage; and

- a supporting apparatus, as defined in claim 13, for supporting said member.

20. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising:

a step of exposing a substrate to a pattern by using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 19;

a step of developing the substrate; and

a step of processing the developed substrate to manufacture the device.

21. (Previously Presented) A supporting apparatus for supporting a member, which mounts a movable stage, above a base, said apparatus comprising:

a permanent magnet arranged on the member, and magnetized in a first direction perpendicular to a gravity direction, which is a direction of gravity acting on the member;

a pair of permanent magnets arranged on the base, and arranged so that said permanent magnet is interposed therebetween; and

driving means for driving said pair of permanent magnets, in order to change a facing area of said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets, in a second direction perpendicular to the first direction and the gravity direction,

wherein said permanent magnet and said pair of permanent magnets are configured to generate a force in the gravity direction and to support the member above the base in the gravity direction through the force.

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Previously Presented) An exposure apparatus for exposing a substrate to a pattern, said apparatus comprising:

a movable stage which holds the substrate;

a member which mounts said movable stage; and

a supporting apparatus, as defined in claim 21, for supporting said member mounted.

25. (Previously Presented) A method of manufacturing a device, said method comprising:

a step of exposing a substrate to a pattern by using an exposure apparatus as defined in claim 24;

a step of developing the substrate; and

a step of processing the developed substrate to manufacture the device.

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the width of said pair of permanent magnets is larger than the width of said permanent magnet in the direction perpendicular to the gravity direction and the magnetized directions.

27. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said driving means is controlled based on information related to a position of the movable stage.